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tapol
British Campaign for the Defence of Political Prisoners and Human Rights in Indonesia

MEMO

To all solidarity groups and other East Timor contacts **8 April, 1986**

Indonesia plans diplomatic strategy on East Timor for 1986

In late March, Foreign Minister Mochtar Kusumaatmaja held meetings of Indonesian ambassadors in Geneva and New York. The Geneva meeting was for ambassadors throughout Europe, while the one in New York was for ambassadors in North and South America, Australia, Japan and India. The main political question on the agenda was East Timor. From comments by Mochtar reported in the Indonesian press, it appears that Jakarta plans to do as follows:

1. At all costs, East Timor must be "obliterated" from the UN agenda this year. Jakarta wants to avoid further postponement of the issue, and to win support for a resolution ending any more consideration of East Timor by the Assembly. Ambassadors were told to lobby for support for Indonesia's position.

2. Mochtar believes that the main criticism directed at Jakarta is now focussed on human rights violations, and that such criticism comes not from governments but from non-government organisations (NGOs). He also believes that the overthrow of Marcos and similar recent events have put countries supported by the US, like Indonesia, into the limelight. Indonesia must therefore act with extra care because it is more prone to criticism than countries not supported by Washington.

3. He believes Indonesia has scored success because discussion about East Timor is now confined to "humanitarian" issues, thus avoiding the political issue (i.e. self-determination). He is determined to keep it this way.

4. He accuses NGOs of using false information about Indonesia, but accepts that this is due in part to Indonesia's "closed-door attitude". So, Indonesia needs to be "more open", not simply denying accusations but "openly providing information on what is happening inside East Timor". There is no suggestion that this will mean giving NGOs direct access to East Timor.

5. It appears that he intends to allow more journalists to visit East Timor, and possibly also non-govermental figures like Father Seifert, a very right-wing German priest who gave glowing reports about East Timor following a visit in January this year. Mochtar says however that journalists hoping to visit places outside Dili will be required to hire a helicopter at their own expence (at $1,000 an hour) because roads are not good enough to travel by car. [FEER reports that Indonesia is expected to launch a new offensive in May, after the present rainy season. It remains to be seen how "open" East Timor will be in such circumstances.]

6. It could be that further ICRC missions will be allowed, in the hope these will provide "leaked" information beneficial to Jakarta.

TAPOL has written to the Portuguese President as enclosed. May we suggest similar initiatives by other groups, to forewarn those who need to know about Jakarta's intentions at this year's General Assembly meeting. In our opinion, it is essential to focus primarily on the issue of self-determination and not be trapped into concentrating only on human rights.

Kindly note plans [see FEER clipping] by Fretilin for a UN resolution this year seeking approval to raise E. Timor at the International Court of Justice in The Hague for a judgement on self-determination. This would prevent E. Timor being removed from the agenda. [FEER is wrong to call it a Court of Human Rights.]

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